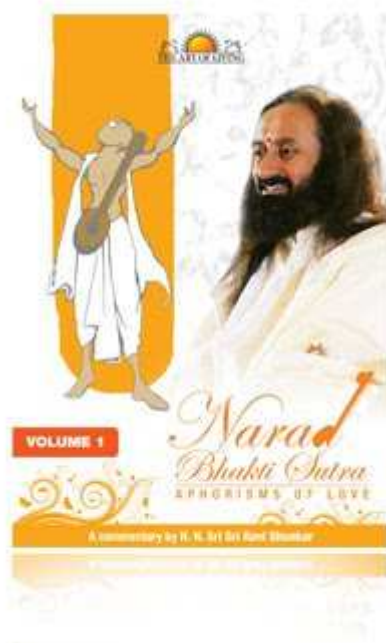


Narad Bhakti Sutras - H.H.Sri Sri Ravi Shankar



In 1990 at North America, His Divine Grace Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji gave a series of beautiful talk on eighty-four aphorisms of the Narada -Bhakti - Sutra - The Aphorism of Love. In ancient days there was a sage - A Rishi whose name was Narada - one who connects you with source - who is at the centre as well on the circumference.

Guruji very beautifully have explained and expressed the thoughts of Narada that lives revolved around love.

The origin of Life is love and the Goal of Life is also Love. Yet, the seeking for Love that bring freedom, comfort and peace, is ongoing.

We will be sharing this knowledge given to us by our dearest Gurudev from tomorrow 23rd July 2009 at the following address : A41 Dwarika, Happy Home Dwarkesh Soc, Behind Bhatia School, Poisar, Saibaba Nagar, Kandivili (W) Mumbai.

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Sutra (1-10) - A Bridge to the Divine



Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya
Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya
Om Namoh Bhagavate Vasudevaya

1. Athato Bhaktim Vyakhyasyamah.

Now let me enunciate what is Love.

Life springs from love- the origin is love and life seeks love. The goal of life is love and, in between, life is sustained by love. There is not a single creature or living entity on this planet that has not known love or is devoid of love. Yet love in its many distortions has brought so much misery in life.

What is love? The Rishi Narada brought out these Bhakti Sutras - aphorisms on love.

Athato - Now, let me enunciate what is "Bhakti", what is devotion.

2. Sa Tvasmin Paramapremarupa.

Devotional service manifests as the most elevated, pure, supreme and perfect Divine Love, Love for God.

That (Bhakti) is of the nature of the perfect love for him.

Narada says that the devotion is of the nature of the perfect love.

For great souls like Narada, who have attained, perfection, this is experiential. This cannot be defined or described by mere words.

Words can convey some sense of shared experiences. Those who have not experienced that perfect love for him cannot be made aware of the experience by mere words.

Narada gives some hints by using analogies of the daily experiences of the common people. Bhakti is like love at its lowest.

People experience love, which occurs between men and women. Worldly love contains desire and lust. When it is free of desire and lust completely it becomes Bhakti (or devotion).

Worldly love can happen between two people but the perfect love, where lust and desire are completely absent, does not require any object. Such perfect love is not 'for' anyone.

That is the reason Narada does not mention Ram, Krishna, Ishwar, Brahman – he says – for him "HIM" means everything else than "I".

Perfect love for 'Him' is the nature of Bhakti. These Sutras are very clear and it is not possible to give different interpretation to them.

3. Amrita Swarupa Cha.

Devotion is ultimate love.

It is like nectar. The very nature of Bhakti is like nectar. Nectar has many shades of meanings.

It is to be noted that Narada does not liken Bhakti to 'Moksha', 'Realisation', 'Release', 'Kaivalya' or 'Samadhi'. He says it is like nectar.

One who drinks nectar becomes free from death. He becomes immune to change.

It is in this sense the word 'nectar' is used here.

One gets the experience of the ultimate bliss, which is not subject to change.

That is the experience of a devotee.

According to the Hinduism, 'Vaikuntha', 'Swarga' "Heaven" "Brahmaloka" are not eternal.

When the merits are used up, one comes back from these worlds. But the bliss one gets in Bhakti is eternal not subject to the Vagaries of time.

This is the experience of Sat, Chit, Ananda – Upanishads call it 'Brahman'.

4. Yallabdhava Pumana Sidhho Bhavati Amrito Bhavati Tripto bhavati.

Having attained that, human life becomes perfect. Divine love brings fulfilment in life.

Achieving this, one has reached the state of perfection, attains god like immortality and all his desires are completely fulfilled.

This aphorism also describes the internal nature of Bhakti.

One attains to perfection through it.

This Sutra makes it clear that it is not the goal of the devotee to achieve immortality or Moksha.

This he obtains without any effort. A devotee is only concerned with the constant blissful existence.

One who reaches that state does not wish to seek anything.

He has become completely satiated and no other sense object is in his thoughts.

The satiation of a devotee and that of an ordinary person have completely different meaning.

An ordinary person is satiated when his worldly desire is fulfilled. But he does not feel complete.

Now desires raise their heads as soon as the old one's are fulfilled. The desires are insatiable.

All the objects without are not of much use in satisfying one's desires.

So long one does not realize the ultimate satisfaction, which can only come by being steady in one self that is no external object remains necessary to satisfy one's desire.

Such a state is only possible when one attains to God.

A person on the path of devotion feels a deep sense of dissatisfaction so long he does not reach the supreme.

When he attains perfection in devotion he attains the ultimate satiation.

Nothing else he becomes perfectly satiated.

5. Yat Prapya Na Kinchid Vanchati, Na Shochati, Na Dveshti, Na Ramate, Notsahi Bhavati.

Having attained that, there is no more craving, no more desires.

Once this is attained, no desire remains for anything else, he is freed from pleasure and pain, liking and disliking, he does not crave for anything else, he now no longer has any enthusiasm to fulfill any other purpose.

One harbors desire for any pleasure till one has not experienced the ultimate pleasures that is Bhakti.

Till one has experienced the absolute bliss one remains interested in small pleasures and worldly desires.

Having experienced the absolute blissfulness, he no longer desires any other pleasure.

This is the characteristic of a devotee.

Through devotion, he transcends the worldly desires and bondages.

Now, he does not retain interest in any worldly matter nor he strives to gain anything.

6. Yat Jnatva Matto Bhavati, Stabhdho Bhavati, Atmaramo Bhavati.

Knowing the divine love, you become intoxicated, so still deep within you, you are reposing in the Self.

Narad is, here describing a person attained to Bhakti.

Once a person has drowned himself in the ocean of devotion, he abandons everything in the care of God.

He becomes like an empty vessel in an ocean.

Then, god descends into him and takes charge of everything.

Now, such a person becomes a vessel of god.

He moves, as god desires him to.

Such a person may appear to be of unsound mind to the worldly people since he is no longer bound by the societal norms or cannons of scriptures.

Such a person sometimes sits quietly in a state of ‘Samadhi’ sometimes he is dancing or singing for no reason examples of Chaitnya, Mira, Ramkrishna, Paramhansa are of such devotees.

7. Sa Na Kamayamana, Nirodharupawat.

Divine love cannot be an object of desire. When the desires cease, then Divine love can be felt.

Divine love cannot be achieved by just desiring it because it is the cessation of desire.

That (Bhakti) is not full of desires it is of the nature of renunciation.

In this Sutra, a difference has been made between the worldly desires, especially sensual desires and devotion.

In case of lust, a person is desirous of pleasures resulting from the objects of desires coming in to contact with the senses.

He desires mental or physical pleasures.

If the desires are not fulfilled or some obstacle comes he remains unsatiated.

In devotion, these desires abandon of their own.

Once the taste of devotion is experience all other pleasures appear too small, no interest remains in them, This is called renunciation.

8. Nirodhastu Loka Veda Vyapara Nyasah.

Being centered, being 100% in activity and rest. This is the way to be in Divine love.

Renunciation is abandonment of all worldly and Vedic activities.
This Sutra gives specific definition of renunciation.

A person attained to the states of Bhakti has no interest in the pleasures of this world nor he has any desire left for the world to come.

One who has become totally free of all desires in this world and nothing remains to be obtained in the next world, is a Bhakta a devotee.

Desires of such person go away of their own he becomes absolutely indifferent to them.

9. Tasminnanyata Tadavirodhisudashinata Cha.

Feeling totally one with the other. Whatever appears to be opposing love, you just be indifferent to it.

To become one with him and to have no interest in anything else is also called renunciation.

When we are absorbed in the Bhakti of our beloved we become one with him.

No difference of 'mine' and 'thine' remains. It is not possible to think of anything else.

Automatically all interest is lost in everything else. All desires cease and all interest is lost.

It is important to understand the nature of renunciation.

It is different from giving up or abandonment. In renunciation, one becomes absolutely indifferent to anything.

He neither seeks nor shuns it.

10. Anyashrayanam Tyagoananyata.

Letting go of all supports.

When all other supports vanish, oneness with him is established.

So long we are trying to reach him through our own efforts, trying to find him in other saints, godmen, at holy places in temples etc; he is not available.

One we leave all the supports and resorts, becoming totally helpless. We resort to our inner soul, he becomes available to us.

When we search him within ourselves, abandoning all other external supports. He becomes available to us.

Once we get the support of that eternal we do not need any other support.

Narada Bhakti Sutra (11-20)



11. Lokavedashu Tadanukulacharanam Tadvirodhishuudasinata.

Behave in such a manner that it is supporting love and be indifferent to anything that appears to be opposing love.

In this world in all the works and duties prescribed by Vedas and other scriptures, we work as per his wish, this is also being indifferent to all the subjects which are contrary to his wishes.

Once a devotee becomes attained to him and the thread of life is given in his hands, then the devotee can do only what he desires him to do.

The devotee does not have any wish or work of his own.

He becomes just a medium to fulfil his wishes. In such case it is not possible for the devotee to act against his wishes. He works, free of the sense of sense.

Whatever the devotees do only that. There cannot be any desire for anything contrary to his wishes.

12. Bhavatu Nishcayadärdhyädürdhvaàm Shastrarakshanam.

Certainly a devotee is beyond all rules. Yet one (devotee) honours the tradition, the injunctions; one honours certain rules.

Even when a devotee becomes fully established in his spiritual nature, even then the scriptures should be obeyed and protected.

13. Anyatha Patitya Shankaya.

Otherwise (if you don't follow certain discipline/rules in life), there is the possibility to fall off the knowledge, off the path of love.

Otherwise, there is a possibility that he may fall from his path.

Once a devotee has obtained perfection, he no longer is bound by the ordinary rules of conduct of the society. Nor is he bound by the discipline of the scriptural authority.

One who has found the ultimate discipline of love to this Lord, he transcends these worldly codes of conduct.

But Narad is administering a warning to such devotees, that that should continue to perform their duties as required by the societal norms and scriptural edicts.

Scriptures are also help people to go on the path of the perfection in the pursuit of the supreme bliss.

Though the conduct of a perfect devotee is the purest form of scriptural conduct. Yet he must abide by the norms of the society and the authority of the scriptures.

Otherwise, there may be the danger of being led astray from one's proper path.

As a matter of fact, great souls who have reached the state of perfection are there to support the scriptures and to strengthen them.

They give the correct interpretation to the scriptures.

14. Lokoapi Tavad Eva Kintu Bhojanadi Vyaparas Tva Sharira Dharanavadhi.

Also everyday essential activities such as taking food, etc. should be done solely with a view to sustaining the body. Honouring the rules, the scriptures brings you enormous freedom and freedom sustains love.

The works prescribed by the Vedas etc and the society should be done regularly so long the devotee is aware of these works, but works like eating etc continue till there is life.

This Sutra emphasizes the need of such works as are essential to maintain the body and to keep it healthy.

Such work have to be done till there is life. Arrangements for food, clothes and housing are essential for this purpose.

A devotee too even after he reaches perfection has to take care of his day to day needs.

Such works are essential; but the useless harmful works, which are not essential for living, are for pursuit of pleasure, riches etc should be totally abandoned. Bhakti is the simple and straight way to lead one's life.

Unnecessary complications arising out of lustful thoughts and worldly desires should not be brought in to it.

15. Tallakh Shanani Vachyante Nanamata Bhedat.

The Truth (about love) is the same but different rishis, different traditions saw different characteristics

Now, Narad narrates the characteristics of that devotion (Bhakti) according to various

schools of thought. Bhakti is one but different persons give different opinions about it, according to their understanding.

Before Narad many Rishis and sages had given their interpretations of Bhakti. Narad reviews these opinions.

There are many devotees and they have interpreted Bhakti or devotion differently in the light of their knowledge and understanding.

Bhakti can only be experienced. It is not possible to define or describe it in words.

But still, for the benefits of the large majority, who cannot reach the state of perfection, such perfect souls have tried to explain and define Bhakti for their benefit to the extent possible.

16. Pujadishv Anuraga Iti Parash Aryah.

Parashara, one of the pioneers of the Vedic tradition, said, "A deep interest in Pooja is a sign of Divine love." 'Poo' means fullness, 'Ja' means that which is born out of fullness. 'Pooja' is what you do from that state of fullness of existence.

According to the son of Sage Parashar (Vyasa) Bhakti is devotion in the practice of worship etc.

To worship god, an idol being the symbol of god, is established then with faith and devotion it is worshipped as if it is god.

It is not possible to give any name and form to god, as such, the idol becomes a symbol of him. But once there is faith and there is devotion in the act of worshipping god descends into that idol.

The formless gets a form. When worship is done for his sake only, without any fear or desire that is Bhakti according to Sage Vyasa.

17. Kathadishv Iti Gargah.

The Rishi Garga said (Bhakthi or Love is) listening to and talking about the glory of your beloved (the Divine). Nothing else interests you.

In the opinion of Acharya Garga, listening to the glories of god (Katha) with devotion is Bhakti.

In worshipping the devotee has to do everything himself, he is an active agent.

But in listening to the 'Katha' or glories of god, he is passive. He has to do nothing.

If someone speaks about the glories of god, just listening to it with single mindedness and devotion is Bhakti.

The devotion in such listening is absolutely essential. One should have single-minded and constant devotion in listening to the glory of God.

Only then can it be called Bhakti. This is the view of sage Garga.

18. Atmarati Avirodhena Iti Shandilyah.

Another Rishi by the name Shandilya says a characteristic of love is rejoicing in the Self without any conflict.

Sage Shandilya holds that devotion in the matters not contrary to the self, is Bhakti.

Vyasa and Garga have put their views simply in ordinary language.

But Shandilya puts forward his point of view in a philosophical way. His target audiences are scholars Philosophers and seers.

His statement is scholarly. It is the very nature of the man to be deeply interested in one self.

This is generally called selfishness. Selfishness is the scratch for pleasure but misery is the result of such pursuits.

To be established in one's own. Self or soul is also a way to seek pleasure. But true pleasure is found in it.

This is the difference between of being content with the self.

No true pleasure can be found without True pleasure or bliss, which is permanent, can come only from within.

To take one's soul in a state of consciousness, where one becomes one with the Supreme Being is devotion or Bhakti.

One realizes Sat, Chit, and Anand or the eternal bliss. This is what Shandilya means.

19. Naradastu Tadarpita Khilacharita Tad Vismarane Param Vyakulateti.

But my opinion is:

- 1. offering all actions, all attitudes and all tendencies to the Divine*
- 2. and experiencing intense pain, intense longing and intense restlessness on forgetting the Divine*

are the real characteristics of Divine love.

Now, Narad gives his interpretation to surrender everything one possesses to Him and to feel extreme anguish if He is forgotten even for a moment is Bhakti.

It should be noted that Sage Narad is not giving his opinion by any sense of ego. He is merely stating the view a 'Narad' as he has done in the case of other sages.

He does not say, "it is my opinion or in my view." Narad does not use the language of a scholar or seer.

He used the language of a devotee that of a lover. He says that surrender of all one's works, even one self to Him is Bhakti.

Now the entire burden is his. Not only our good works but also the bad works should be surrendered to him.

Then we shall not have the sense of doer ship. Whatever is done, it is his wish.

There does not remain any difference between “Me’ and ‘You’.

This is Bhakti. Like a true love, even if the beloved is out of sight even for a moment, one experiences the extreme anguish. That is the state of Bhakti.

20. Asthyevamevam.

It is so.

Narada says, “It is just like that whatever is said in these definitions Narada says, Bhakti is just like that.

Though the experience of that Infinite cannot be certain with in mere words. Yet these definitions give hints about Him.

They show the way to go the path to be trodden.

These are merely hints, not the real taste of Bhakti.

Sutra (21-30) Rejoice without Conflict



21. Yatha Vraja Gopikanam

Like it happened to the Gopis of Brindavan. The Gopis had nothing of their own. Every move they made was for the Divine.

Like the Bhakti of the Gopis of Braja. Innumerable Gopis are the symbol of the countless souls, atmans, They are very eager to become one with Krishna.

Krishna is the symbol of the supreme God. In such love, it is not at all necessary for Krishna to be physically present.

It is sufficient to have his devotion in one's heart. Like the love of Radha for Krishna, who always was in his company the love of Mira is exactly on the same footing, even though Krishna was not present with her.

Whenever the fire of Bhakti is kindled in the soul, the realization of God (Krishna) is inevitable. Gopis are not able to forget Krishna even for a moment.

They become very anguished when Krishna is not with them.

The love of Gopis for Krishna is not the ordinary love of the mortals, it is the purest form of the love of God, which is Bhakti.

They see Krishna as the Supreme Lord not as an ordinary man.

Whenever, one reaches that highest peak of love, where one's beloved is transformed into God, the love becomes Bhakti.

22. Tatrapī Na Mahatmya Jnana Vismṛity Apavadah.

They (the Gopis) did not forget the greatness, the respect, the glory of the Divine, while also being in Divine Love.

Even in that case (i.e. in the case of Gopis) to say that they were not aware of the divine glory of the lord, is not correct.

As stated in the previous Sutra, the Gopis love Krishna as the Supreme God not as a man, this awareness of divine state of Krishna exalted the love of Gopis to the level of Bhakti.

Gopis were loving Krishna all alike.

There was no jealousy or heart burning among them as is common in the worldly love affairs.

All of them loved Krishna alike, no one wanted to have any exclusive right over the lord.

In case of ordinary love of men, lovers want to have exclusive control over their beloveds.

Even more doubt of some one else's presence causes jealousy and heartburn.

Such is the difference between the love of ordinary mortals and that of Gopis.

23. Tad Vihinam Jaranam Iva

Without that love, without that respect, love is worth nothing. It is like the love of prostitutes.

If they had not known the presence of the lord and had they (Gopis) not known his glory, their love too would have been of the nature of an adulterer's passion.

The presence of the divinity exalts the love of Gopis to the state of absolute purity and glory.

The absence of the divinity would have reduced the love of Gopis for Krishna, to the level of the adulterer love affairs of the ordinary men and women.

24. Nasty Eva Tasmin Tatsukha Sukhitvam.

Rejoicing in the comfort of the Beloved (the Divine) is the sign of Divine Love.

In that (in the adulators love affair one's own happiness cannot become the happiness of others.

In the worldly love, driven by passion, each lover wants to derive pleasure for himself. Pleasure of one cannot become the pleasure of all.

But in divine love, the pleasures and pains are shared alike.

The Gopis shared their pleasures and their pains equally.

25. Sa Tu Karma Jnana Yogebhyo Api Adhikatarā

This love is higher than action, higher than any service that you may do.

If you examine, if you keenly look into the experience of love that you all have had, you will find all these characteristics hiding here and there. It is all there, it only needs a little watering, a little enrichment. That is why these Sutras - the threads.

For a kite to go high, it needs a little thread. This knowledge, this wisdom is such thread.

The divine love (Bhakti) described above, is far superior to work (Karma), knowledge (Gyana) and yoga.

Following the path of work, knowledge or yoga, it is with great difficulty that the practitioners may reach the divine.

But the lord himself comes to his Bhakta. Karma-yoga or the yoga of work is the way of reaching the divine by doing the work without any desire for its rewards.

The way of knowledge (Gyana) is similarly lies in obtaining knowledge free from delusions and impurities.

Yoga requires constant practice and renunciation to reach the state of the perfection.

Bhakti has no pre-conditions, no pre-qualifications.

There is no prescribed method or formula in Bhakti. On the contrary a devotee believes that he cannot obtain anything through his own efforts.

When one leaves aside all the supports and become free of ego, the divine descends into him. This is his grace.

Therefore, Narad pronounces that the way of Bhakti is far superior to the ways of Karma, Gyana or yoga.

Being a realized soul his pronouncement has authority and authenticity. Everyone is free to try it and experience it.

26. Phala Rupertvat

That Divine love is itself an end, is itself the fruit.

Narad says that the Bhakti is of the nature of the fruit or the reward.

This is a unique declaration. The depth of this Sutra should be understood clearly.

It is the belief of the followers of the ways of Karma, Gyana or yoga that the seeds of these should be watered by the constant effort and practice.

Then it will grow into a plant in season it will bear flowers and fruits. But in Bhakti, there is no correlation between the work and its reward or its fruit.

The Supreme Being is completely free from our efforts, he is not controlled by our efforts, and He is far above these things.

There is the worldly rule that one should sow the seed, water it gives it fertilizers, then it will grow in to a plant.

The flowers and fruit will come and this cycle of cause and effect will continue forever.

This is not the rule of the Supreme God. The Bhakti is not of the nature of a seed, it is of the nature of the fruit itself.

There is no need to Strive or to make efforts, fruit is obtained directly.

27. Ishwarasyapi Abhimani Dveshitvat Dainya Priyatvat Cha.

Even to God pride is not palatable. Ego is stiffness, humility is being like a feather.

Narad says that God dislikes the sense of self or ego and he likes one's feeling of helplessness and one's inadequacy in obtaining salvation.

Narada, is again saying something of get importance. God does not like or dislike anything.

How can he be concerned with these?

But Narad is being subtle. He means that so long the heart is full of pride and the sense of self (ego) there is no room for God to descend into it.

When the devotee is totally devoid of pride and ego, he becomes a void and then God can descend into it easily.

28. Tasyah Jnanam Eva Sadhanam Ity Eke.

Some people say that you can be humble only through knowledge.

Some say that knowledge alone is the means to attain it.

29. Anyonya Ashrayatvam Ity Eke .

Others say they (Love and Knowledge) complement each other.

The opinions of the sages (Archaryas) are of arguments and counter argument. Bhakti is not dependent on these disputatious.

It is not essential that the Bhakta should be a person of some superior intellect or knowledge. In the same way, devotion and knowledge.

In the same way, devotion and knowledge cannot be interdependent.

The ways of knowledge and Bhakti are different.

A follower of the path of devotion need not have any qualification of intellect.

The path of knowledge is similarly, sufficient in itself.

A Gautam Buddha need not be a Bhakta, too.

30. Svayam Phalarupeti Brahmakumarah

But again I tell you, Love is the final. Love is the fruit. Love is the end.

According to Sanat kumar and Narada that Bhakti is itself of the nature of the fruit.

Narada is not in agreement with the preposition that knowledge is the means of attaining to Bhakti.

He also does not agree with the view that the knowledge and the Bhakti are interdependent.

He sage Bhakti is itself a reward, it is like fruit.

It does not require any prop or support. Bhakti is its own reward.

Sutra (31-40) Glorify the Divine



31. Rajagriha Bhojanadishu Tathaiva Drishtatvath

32. Na Tena Raja Paritoshah Kshu Shantir Va.

For it is seen thus in the case of the king, home and food.

Sharing does not become a king, traveller does not derive satisfaction nor the hunger is satisfied.

Simply having Knowledge is not sufficient, Love is needed and the experience is needed.

Narada clarifies his view by giving an example.

He says that if we argue in various ways about the food and we accumulate a lot of knowledge about the food, it does not satisfy our hunger.

Similarly a lot of discussion about God and by acquiring a lot of knowledge about Him, does not help us to realize him.

Bhakti is like the food, which satisfies hunger while knowledge is like the art of cooking which does not satisfy our hunger.

33. Tasmāt Saiva Grahya Mumukshibhiḥ.

And so, those who are desirous of liberation or freedom should only go for Divine Love.

Therefore, those who want to be free of the worldly bondages, who want to obtain Moksha, they should resort to Bhakti.

The world is the cause of bondages, this is often said. But if we go a bit deeper into this Sutra of Narad, we shall reach the conclusion that the world is the bondage itself.

Once world is there the bondage too is there.

One's wife, parents, children, home make a world and there are bondages.

Even the desire to reach the supreme is bondage.

When we become free from all the bondages, the supreme descends in to our hearts.

All the hopes and desires of life are bondages.

Bhakti is an easy way to be free from these.

Bhakti does not mean abandoning the world or fleeing from it. It is to accept the world as the grace of God.

34. Tasya Sadhanani Gayanti Acharya

The great teachers have sung the means for this (for walking on the path of love).

Teachers (Acharyas) have described in hymns and psalms about the means of realising Bhakti.

Since ancient times the seers and sages have composed many hymns, psalms, mantras and songs etc. to achieve the perfection in divine love.

Vedas, Puranas and Scriptures are full of these compositions.

In the following Sutras the method of reaching the state of perfection's has been described in detail.

35. Tat Tu Vishaya tyagat Sangatyagat Cha

(One method is:) Get away from the objects of the senses, back to the Source that you are.

That Bhakti can be obtained by abandoning the worldly desires and by renunciation of attachment to the worldly objects.

It is possible to reach the state of Bhakti when one removes the obstacles, which come in the way of its realization.

Having desire of worldly enjoyments interest in the objects of senses are the impediments in the path of a devotee.

To give up the worldly pleasures totally and to have complete indifference and detachment with the sense objects are essential to realize perfection in Bhakti, according to Narad.

36. Avya vritta Bhajanat.

(Next method is:) "Uninterrupted" sharing of all that you are.

Bhakti can be attained by singing the glories the lord (Bhajans) without any interruption.

Being of single mind and totally absorbed in the lord free from worldly obstacles like lust, desires like dislikes etc, by singing his glories continually one can reach the perfection in devotion.

The devotee sees only god in all his works. Whatever he does, it is for the sake of God.

37. Loke Api Bhagawat Guna Shravana Kirtanat.

Also, in the world and daily activities, praise the divine.

While doing the day to day activities of life, singing and hearing the glories of God (is the way of realizing him).

To do Bhajans or to hear and to listen to the glories of the lord does not mean that the devotee give up his ordinary activities of life.

He only sees the presence of the lord in all his activities.

He finds his daily works as a means to serve the lord. Food seems as if given to him by the grace of God.

He seeks to serve the lord by all his activities in the world.

38. Mukhyatastu Mahatkripayaiva Bhagawat Kripa Leshad Va

Predominant of all this is the Grace of the Master, of Guru. With just a little bit of Grace from God, you gain the merit of the Grace of the Master, the Guru.

One realizes perfection in devotion through the grace of the great souls or through the small grace of the lord.

Bhakta gets guidance by the grace of his guru or some great soul.

Dhruva, Prahlad etc. obtain perfection through the guidance and grace of sage Narad himself.

A small grace of god can also help one to realize Bhakti.

Mira, Nanak etc great souls attained perfection by the grace of God.

39. Mahatsangastu Durlabho Agamyo Moghas Cha

And such a company of the Master is difficult to get. Unfathomable is his being; you cannot measure the depth or understand easily.

(But) the contact with the great souls Chya and to be benefitted by such contacts is very rare.

The influence of such a soul is subtle, in comprehensible and unfailing in its effect.

This Sutra of Narad is of even greater relevance today.

So called God-men, Babas and Gurus are growing in plenty.

But Narad is not describing these types. He sages that are very rare to come in contact with a great soul a true Guru. In this time, hypocrisy and fraud souls were rare to come by.

Today it is virtually impossible to come into contact with such a soul. But the effect of such a soul is subtle, deep and unfailing.

The influence of Sarnarth, Guru Ramdas on Shivaji is the example of one such event.

40. Labhyate Api Tatkrupaya Iva

Even that (company of the Divine or an Enlightened One) is bestowed on you unconditionally, due to Grace.

Nevertheless, realization of Bhakti is possible only through the grace of God or god-men alone.

Narad reiterates that Bhakti is by the grace of God or god-men alone. By one's own efforts it cannot be obtained.

Sutra (41-50) Crossing the Ocean of Maya (unreality)



41. Tasmin tat Jane Bhedabhavat

Between him and his people, there is no difference

Because there is no difference between God and his devotee.

Here Narad tells about the oneness of God and his devotee.

The devotee becomes established in God alone.

When the difference between God and devotee is vanished that is Bhakti.

42. Tadeva Sadhyatam Tadeva Sadhyatam

Strive for that (company of that Grace), and strive for that alone.

Whatever practices enable us to find his grace, we should adopt them.

There cannot be any limit to the extent of his kindness.

We should strive to become worthy of his kindness.

All the obstacles in this way, such as worldly desires and other bondages, should be removed.

43. Dushanga Sarvathaiva Tyajya

By all means, shun bad company (a company that fuels negativity).

Evil company must be shunned by all means at all the times.

As the company of great souls has been said to be very beneficial for one's salvation.

Similarly there can be no greater evil than the company of evil men to lead one to the path of evil and ruination.

Evil company must always be shunned like poison at all the times.

It is an old saying, "a man is known by the company he keeps."

44. Kama Krodha Moha Smriti Bramsha Buddhinasha Sarva Kaaranatvat.

Bad company brings ambition, desire, frustration, anger, delusion, loss of wisdom and thus leads to utter ruin.

It (evil company) leads to lust, anger, and delusion, loss of memory and discrimination and complete ruination.

It is not possible to enumerate the evil effects caused by bad companions.

Bad company lead one to total ruination by all means.

45. Tarangita Apime Sangata Samudrayanti.

These (anger, passion, etc.) may begin as a small ripple, but if you keep associating with bad company, they will become like an ocean.

These (evil effects) rise in form of small ripples in the beginning but by associating with the evil company they become virtually like an ocean.

Even small faults and shortcomings in men, become many time more aggravated by associating with the evil company.

These shortcomings become like deep oceans and it becomes very difficult to get out of these shortcomings.

Ultimately such a man leaves the good path and sinks into the depths of worldly lusts, sinful ways and his path of salvation is closed.

46. Kastarati Kastarati Mayam Yah Sangam Tyajati Yo Mahanubhavan Sevate Nirmamo Bhavati.

Who crosses this ocean of illusion, this ocean of unreality ?

One who serves the Enlightened, one who serves the wise, one who keeps wise company, becomes free from this feeling of "I want this, I want that, I, I, I."

Who is capable of crossing over the illusion of the One, who abandons all such things which arouses the desire for sensual pleasures after they come in contact with the sense organ.

One who relinquishes all his materialistic-wealth after coming in contact with the saints and engaging himself in their Servitude.

Narad says that only such people can successfully cut the web of this illusionary net(world), who abandons all such things which are likely to influence his sense organs.

His mind become tranquil and devoid of any passion. He gets benefitted from being in the company of virtuous people & saints.

He engages himself in their service and by their blessings, he successfully gets liberated from all the bondages of their world.

47. Yo vivikta Sthanam Sevate Yo Loka Bandham Unmulayati Nistraigunyo Bhavati, Yo Yogakshemam Tyajati

One who reposes in that corner deep inside oneself, where there is nothing/nobody else, one who is not worried about what people tell them or talk about them, one who is beyond all the three gunas - the satva (knowledge), rajas (restlessness) and tamas (dullness), and one who is free from (worrying about) acquiring and maintaining whatever has come in life really crosses this ocean of misery, of maya or illusion.

Narad gives the characteristics of a devotee. He says, Living in a lonely and pure place, freed from all his desires and bondages of all the three worlds going beyond the three modes of nature (gunas); going up all the desires of acquisition and preservation (the attains to Bhakti).

Narad says that a seek after Bhakti keeps his dwelling in a lonely and pure place, so that he does not face unwarranted disturbances.

He can become one minded and devotee himself fully in the love of God.

That devotee does not have any desire for anything in all three worlds.

He transcends the three gunas of nature, he becomes 'gunatita'. He does not even think of acquiring worldly possessions or be concerned about their preservation.

48. Yah karmaphalam Karmani Sanyasyathi Tato Nirdvandvo Bhavati

He who does not have a concern about the results of his actions, who is centered in action, and who even rises beyond the knowledge, attains the pure love.

He gives up all the fruits of his work, renounces all selfish pursuits and transcends all the dualities like pleasure and pain etc.

49. Yo Vedanapi Sanyasyathi Kevalam Avicchinna Anuragam Labhate

One who has transcended both knowledge and action (after going through them), attains that pure love which is everlasting.

He gives up even the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the Vedas and the scriptures. He only hankers after the god unmindful of anything else.

50. Sa Tarati Sa Tarati Lokam Sa Taaryati

He crosses, he alone crosses and he helps other people to cross.. (the ocean of unreality)

He goes beyond this maya undoubtedly and he is able to carry the world beyond this maya (delusion).

Bhakta not only goes beyond the world of illusion himself but he is capable of taking the whole world, who follow his path, with him beyond the delusions of this world.

Guru Nanak, Kabir etc are such Bhakta's who helped countless people to cross the world of illusion in their company.

Sutra (51-60) Love is beyond Proof



51. Anirvacaniyam Premaswarupam

Divine Love cannot be expressed by words

The nature of Bhakti cannot be described defined or analyzed with any degree of president.

The nature of love, that is Bhakti, cannot be explained by more words.

The language is not adequate for this purpose.

There is no way to express that love by means of mere words.

52. Muka Svadana Vat

This love is like the taste of a dumb person, like the joy of one who cannot speak!

It is like a joy of taste, which a dumb person is unable to express through words.

This sutra of Narad has become a general saying, Kabir talks of love, like the taste of sugar to a dumb man who cannot describe it in words.

When Bhakti is experienced the tongue loses its power to express, the word loses its potency to describe.

Even Narad cannot find words to describe it, so he says it is like the taste of some dainty to a dumb man; it is inexpressible.

53. Prakashyate Kvapi Patre

Such intense love for the Divine shines through some rare people. (it is there in other people too but it 'shines' in some)

Whenever someone makes oneself worthy of it, Bhakti is illuminated in him.

The divine love is manifested very rarely in some great soul.

The light of god descends into that rare person.

Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, Mira are such devotees who were illumined by the divine light.

This was felt by the people who were around them.

The light in fact, is still shining and giving guidance to the world.

54. Guna Rahitam Kamana Rahitam Pratikshana Vardhamanam Avichinnam Sukshma Taram Anubhava Rupam.

This love is without any of the three gunas (satva, rajas, tamas), it grows moment by moment, uninterrupted, finer than the finest, and experiential (not intellectual)

Such love (Bhakti) is devoid of any characteristic, it is free of any desire, it increases with time, it is subtler than the subtlest and it is of the nature of the experience.

This is the definition of Bhakti that it is devoid of any characteristic. It is free to Satvika, Rajasika or Tamasika,, Gunas.

It is beyond gunas. Love is free of all the shackles of the world and it is beyond it.

Neither there is any desire in it nor there is any precondition. It does not require any proper support. One quality of love is god on increasing only.

The difference between lust and love is that the lust decreases once the object of lust is achieved but love only grows and increases.

When the object (God) is achieved it increases even more. Love is very subtle.

It cannot be analyzed. It can only be experienced. It cannot be defined.

55. Tat Prapya Tadeva valokayati Tadeva Shrinoti Tadeva Bashayati, Tadeva Chintayati.

Attaining which you are compelled to see only that (Love) everywhere, hear only of it everywhere, talk only about it all the time and think only of it all the time.

Reaching to that state one only hears it, talks about it and thinks only about it.

The person obtaining the state of Bhakti experiences that absolute blissful state. All other pleasures become too small to him.

He only hears about that bliss, talks about it and thinks about that bliss, called Bhakti.

56. Gauni Tridha Guna Bhedad Artadi Bhedath Va

This is the love beyond all three characteristics or gunas namely, Satvic (pure), Rajasic (restless) and Tamasic(dull).

Secondary (Gaudi) devotion is of three types according to the natures (gunas) i.e. Satvika, Rajasika or Tamasika.

It can also be divided into a cause by distress, curiosity or desire for wealth. Bhakti is one essentially.

But it acquires different forms depending upon the nature of man.

But such division is possible in secondary devotion only not in the pure (para) Bhakti.

A Satvika man desires freedom from sins, he desires Moksha.

The Bhakti which desires fame and wealth etc. is of the nature of rajasika.

Similarly, the Bhakti done with intent to cause any harm to someone or some such evil purpose is called tamasika Bhakti.

57. Uttarasmad Uttarasmat Purvapurvo Shreyaya Bhavati

Each category from above is better than the later one. In other words, satvic love is better than rajasic, and rajasic better than tamasic.

The Bhakti of the previous kind is better than the types of Bhakti coming later. Rajasika

Bhakti is better than Tamasika Bhakti and Satvika Bhakti is better than Rajasika Bhakti.

The highest form of Bhakti is Parabhakti which is undertaken without any desire for any thing.

58. Anyasmath Saulabhyam Bhaktau

This path of Love is the easiest path. You just have to acknowledge love, it is already there.

This type of Bhakti (a secondary type) is easily attained than Para Bhakti (primary Bhakti) It is difficult for men to be free of their natures (gunas).

Therefore, the Bhakti is coloured with their gunas.

Para Bhakti is free from all the gunas. It is Gunatita State.

This Bhakti is easy and no rituals or procedures are required.

59. Pramanantarasyanapekshatvat Svayam Pramanatva

Love is its own proof and does not need any other proof.

Bhakti does not require any proof.

It is self-evident It does not require any proof or argument to go into the depth of Bhakti and in the proof of Bhakti lies in the experience.

Once the taste of Bhakti s experience no proof is needed.

Mira, Kabir, Guru Nanak and Ram-Krishna Paramhansa do not need any argument or proof for their devotion.

60. Shantirupat Paramanandarupa Cha

Divine love is of the nature of peace and extreme ecstasy.

Bhakti is of the nature of peace and of the form of absolute bliss.

It does not long to experience the joys of Bhakti.

As soon as the thought of Bhakti comes to mind.

We start getting the glimpse of eternal peace and that of absolute bliss. This absolute bliss is called the attainment of the supreme state.

It is called Sat, Chit and Ananda. His experience is called Sat. He is of the nature of awareness, therefore it is called Chit.

Being the nature of divine bliss it is called Anand.

It is Sat, Chit, Anand.

That experience of Bhakti is called of the nature of Satchitanand.

Sutra (61-70) Merge with the Divine



61. Loka Hanau Chinta Na Karya Nivedit Atmaloka Vedatvat.

One should not get worried about losing anything, for you have already surrendered everything to the Divine.

Bhakta is not mindful of the public censure or criticism.

He has abandoned everything, all his world self as well as Vedas to the lord.

This Sutra is relevant even for today's world. Often we find that evil man are given all the honour and respect by the people and the good are censured.

But it is not the nature of the Bhakta to care for the honours or censures of the public.

Bhakta is deeply drunk with the experience of the supreme lord, he is beyond the world and the Vedas.

62. Na Tadha Siddhau Loka Vyavaharo Heyah Kintu Phalatyagah Tatsadhanam Cha Karyam Eva

Until you get perfectly grounded in love, keep acting (meditating, etc.) without worrying about the fruits of your action.

So long Bhakti is not attained, it is desirable to conform to the norms of the society.

But there should not be any attachment to the worldly objects, constant efforts to realize Bhakti should be continued.

Narad advises that the devotee should observe the rules and norms of the society to the extent possible.

It is not desirable to shun the world, its attachment to its fruits should be shunned.

This should be made the means of obtaining Bhakti.

Not the worlds but desires for its fruit are to be given up.

63. Stri dhana Nastika Charitram Na Shravaniam.

Do not hear the glories or explanations of sex, money and atheism.

Discussion about the beauty and conduct of women, discussion about the splendour of the richmen, discussions about atheists and the like should be shunned.

It is useless for a Bhakta to waste time in such discussions.

64. Abhimana Dambhadikam Tyajyam

Drop all arrogance.

Pride, egoism etc. should be shunned.

This sutra says that when everything has been surrounded to the lord, nothing should be kept back.

Not even one sins, pride, sense of self, lust anger, should be kept back.

These are very difficult to conquer, but it surrendered to the lord once can become easily free from these.

This is very easy way to rid oneself of these formidable obstacles in the way of Bhakti.

65. Tad Arpitakhila Charah San Kama Krodha Abhimanadikah, Tasmin Eva Karaniyam.

Whatever you want to be passionate about, just redirect that same passion towards Divinity.

After surrendering everything to him lust, anger, pride etc still remain in the Bhakta, these too should be surrendered to Him.

Narad makes this important pronouncement that one should absolutely become free of everything, including lust, anger, pride etc. by surrendering these, too to the lord.

This is the privilege of the Bhakta.

This path is not available to the practitioners of the ways of knowledge, Yogis and to those conducting sacrifices.

Once Bhakta become totally free of all his burdens he is ready to do whatever is ordained by him.

66. Tri Rupa Bhanga Purvakam Nityadasya Nityakanta Bhajanatmakam Prema Karyam Premaiva Karyam

Whichever way you started (satvic, rajasic or tamasic), go beyond or transcend it. Serve the divinity with a feeling that "I am the eternal servant of You", "I am an Eternal partner of you". Thinking only of the Divine is the only thing that is worth doing.

Love and pure love, alone which is like that of a devoted servant or of a wife, the love that transcends all three gunas, should be practiced.

Narad says that the love for God should be constant and unerring like a devoted servant has to for his master or a wife has for her husband.

Such love goes beyond all the gunas. It is without any selfish desire or any desire for any reward.

It is for the beloved only for his sake only.

This is Bhakti.

67. Bhakta Ekantino Mukhyah

The devotee has only the Divine as his only aim.

Those who have one pointed devotion to the lord, without any desire for anything else, such devotees are primary or main devotees.

Devotion of these Bhaktas is called Mukya Bhakti.

68. Kanthavarodha Romashrubhih Parasparam Lapamanah Pavayanti Kulani Prithvim Cha

When devotees get together and talk, speak about the divine, their throats choke, their hair stands up, tears roll down their eys, and they only uplift each other. They purify not just their family and relatives, but purify the whole world.

(Such devotees) talk to each other with choked voices, their eys full of tears, thrilled to the cose.

(Such devotees) not only purify their families but they purify the entire earth.

Narad says that real devotees are so full of gratefulness and so overwhelmed that their voices becomes tremulous eyes fill with tears and hairs stand on end.

They discuss about him with each other. They purify the land of their birth, not only their families.

69. Tirthi Kurvanti Tirthani Su Karmi Kurvanti Karmani Sac Shasthri Kurvanti Shastrani

These devotees make holy places holier, bring life to wisdom and are filled by the divine.

Sacredness of the places of pilgrimage, righteousness and goodness of actions, spiritual authority to the scriptures is imparted (by these devotees)

70. Tanmayah

They are filled with God.

As every one of these is filled with the spirit of God through these devotees. Narad makes an important announcement.

He says the places of pilgrimages are sanctified by the presence of devotees, places like Kashi, Prayag, Rameshwaram are holy places because many devotees did their penances there. Kashi devotees did their penances there.

Kashi was sanctified because of lord Shiva. Prayag by many Rishis, Rameshwaram became a place of pilgrimage as Rama himself worshipped lord Shiva there.

Actions of Bhaktas like Dhruva, Prahlad, Bharata, Hanumana, etc have become standard good and righteous conduct in the society.

Similarly the experience of the devotees have imparted moral authority to the scriptures.

Vedas were sung by Rishis filled with devotion. Gita is a discourse of the lord himself to guide his devotee Arjuna.

Voices of Kabir and Nanak gave authenticity to the scriptures.

Sutra (71-84) Worship is Inevitable



71. Modante Pitaro, Nrityanti Devatah Sanatha Cheyam Bhur Bhavati

The ancestors, angels and all the divinities simply rejoice in the very presence of such a devotee and this earth finds their lordship.

The forefathers are delighted, Gods dance with joy and the earth feels as some saviour has come to give her salvation.

72. Nasti Teshu Jati Vidya Rupa Kula Dhana Kriyadi Bhedah.

Among those devotees, there is no difference by caste, by knowledge, by looks, by birth, by wealth or by actions.

(Among the Bhaktas) there is no distinction of caste, creed, culture, beauty, learning, family, wealth or profession etc.

73. Yatah tadiyah

Because they all belong to the Divine.

Because they all are his own. Since all are created by God, to him all are equal. How can he differentiate among his creations? His gates are open to all, without any discrimination.

74. Vado Navalambya

(The devotees) do not make arguments.

It is not proper to enter into any debate or argument about him.

75. Bahulyavakasatvad Aniyata Tva Cha.

There are so many possibilities in logic, in arguments. Do not sit and argue.

There is scope for many opinions about him but it is not possible to reach the ultimate truth by arguments alone.

76. Bhakti Shastrani Mananiyani Tad Bodhaka Karmani Karaniyani

You need to do all the service activity and the actions that have been asked of you to do (pranayama, meditation, etc.)

(But) study discussions and contemplations on the scriptures dealing with devotional aspects, should be undertaken.

Narad is advising against the idle discussions and arguments of the vulgar.

The devotees must study the scriptures dealing with devotion, they should reflect and meditate upon them and should discuss them among themselves.

77. Sukha Duhkheccha Labhadi Tyakte Kale Pratikshamane Ksanardham Api Vyartham Na Neyam

Be patient to attain that state when all happiness, sorrow, desires and gains can be completely forsaken, and keep doing the practices (meditation, etc.) without giving up or wasting time.

After surrendering his desires, pleasures, pains, loss or gain etc the time saved should not at all be wasted in the idle arguments and discussions.

78. Ahimsa Satya Saucha Dayastikiyadi Charitriyani Paripalaniyani

Observe non-violence, truth, cleanliness, compassion and faith.

He (Bhakta) should acquire and strengthen virtues like non-violence, truth, purity, compassion, faith in God and similar other qualities.

79. Sarvada Sarvabhavena Nischintair Bhagavan Eva Bhajaniyah

Always and under all moods and circumstances, without worrying, dwell only on the Divine.

It is desirable to worship the Lord, in all circumstances at all the times, after freeing one's mind of all the anxieties and worries.

80. Sa Kirtiyamanah Sighram Eva Virbhavaty Anubhavayati Bhaktan

When you sing from your heart, when you long for the Divine, that Divinity comes quickly.

Singing his glories in such manner the devotee realizes him soon, through his grace. He manifests himself to the devotee.

81. Tri satyasya Bhaktir Eva Gariyasi Bhaktir Eva Gariyasi

Of the three paths (knowledge, action and love), Divine Love is the most supreme.

Only love of the Sat (the truth), Chit (the absolute) and Anand (the bliss) is the greatest.

This love (Bhakti), indeed, is the greatest.

Narad says that realization of the absolute, the truth and the bliss is the greatest experience, there is nothing which remains beyond it.

That is the Bhakti, the greatest experience.

82. Guna mahatmayaShakti, RupaShakti, PujaShakti, SmaranaShakti, DasyaShakti, SakhyaShakti, VatsalyaShakti, KantaShakti, AtmanivedanaSakti, TanMayaShakti, ParamaVirahaShakti, Rupa EkadhaApi Ekadashadha Bhavati

Though there is only one Divine Love, it finds its expression in 11 flavors.

- 1. Love for the glory and the qualities that the Divine exhibits*
- 2. Adoring the Divine in all the forms in the Universe.*
- 3. Worship the Divine always*
- 4. Constant remembrance of the Divine*
- 5. Longing to be the servant of God*
- 6. Taking God as one's beloved*
- 7. Considering God as one's child*
- 8. Considering Him as one's partner*
- 9. Offering the entire self to the Divine*
- 10. Being immersed in knowing that he is already in you and every part of you is immersed in that Divinity*
- 11. an intense longing for the Divine.*

Bhakti or divine love is one but it manifests itself into eleven forms. Love of the glories of the lord his beauty, worship, constant remembrance his service.

Him as a friend, as a son, as a wife for her husband, self surrender to him.

Complete absorption in him, pain of separation from Him.

83. Ity Evam Vadanti Jana Jalpa Nirbhayah Eka matah Kumara Vyasa Shuka Shandilya Garga Vishnu Kaundilya Shesha Udhava Aruni Bali Hanuman Vibhishana Dayo Bhakty Acharyah.

Narada says that all those Gurus or Acharyas (leaders / teachers) who have expounded on devotion unanimously say that devotion is the greatest path. He named thirteen such great saints who have lived the love. These teachers were not bothered about what people will think or comment about them.

Thus the teacher (Acharyas) of Bhakti as one in the opinion, unmindful of public criticism the great teacher are – Kumara (Sanata or Narad) Vyasa-Shuka, Shandilya, Garg, Vishnu, Kaundiya, Seshaudalhava, Truni, Bal Hanuman, Vibhisana and others.

**84. Ya Idam Narada Proktam Shivanushasanam Vishvasiti Shradhate Sa Bhaktiman
Bhavati Sa Prestham Labhate Sa Prestham Labhata Iti**

Om Tat Sat

*These are the aphorisms of the love of Narada, and whoever believes in them, will
definitely attain Divine Love.*

Whoever believes in this auspicious Gospel of Narada and has faith in it. becomes a Bhakta of God and attains the highest state & goal.

Om Tat Sat